

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

looked as if the old Empire were to fall to pieces. Unable to counteract this movement of disintegration at home, the Iranian government decided to bring the matter to the newly formed United Nations.

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE SOVIET-IRANIAN

DISPUTE

It was characteristic of the Iranian political situation that nothing that happened between Iran and the Soviet Union could remain of indifference to Great Britain. But even more characteristic was the fact that beginning with the fall of 1945 the United States was definitely drawn into the vortex of turbulent Iranian politics. On November 24, 1945, at the time when the Azerbaijan rebellion began, the United States delivered a note to the Soviet Union proposing the evacuation of Soviet, British, and American troops from Iran by January 1, 1946. A parallel British note was also delivered. Moscow's reply was negative. The Soviet note of November 29 to the United States rejected the American proposal, invoked earlier correspondence with the British government as providing for the withdrawal of troops by March 2, 1946, blamed "reactionary elements" for troubles in Azerbaijan and denied interference of Soviet military authorities in internal affairs of Iran. The note said further:

The Soviet Government opposed the dispatch of new Iranian troops to northern districts of Iran and informed the Iranian Government that the dispatch of further Iranian forces to northern Iran could cause not the cessation, but the increase, of the disorders and likewise bloodshed, which would compel the Soviet Government to introduce into Iran further forces of its own for the purpose of preserving order and insuring the security

of the Soviet garrison.

The note finally invoked the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of February 26, 1921, as giving the Soviet Union the "right of introduction of Soviet troops into the territory of Iran."

This exchange of notes did not exhaust diplomatic action. In the West it was hoped that Azerbaijan could be discussed during the second conference of Foreign Ministers to be held in Moscow in the middle of December, 1945. British Foreign Secretary Bevin and American Secretary of State Byrnes arrived in Moscow on December